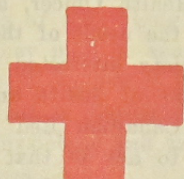


THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

What it Is and What it Does



Housing of a Health Centre

A HEALTH Centre is a place used for purposes connected with maintaining and improving the health of the people of a community. It becomes a headquarters and clearing house for health services.

A Community Health Centre may occupy a building, a part of a building, or it may occupy only a room in a building. Whichever may be the case it should be specially equipped for the work to be done. It is desirable that the location be central and the premises attractive, comfortable and convenient.

The Health Centre should be or should contain a room large enough to be used for lectures, health talks and educational moving pictures.

Equipment

A Health Centre is provided with equipment, such as charts, showing normal growth of children; charts showing average normal heights and weights of men and women; apparatus for illustrating lectures upon health matters; weighing scales to determine the weight of infants; a library of books on health subjects and (for distribution) pamphlets upon health matters of daily concern to individuals and communities. In the larger cities it should have a directory of hospitals, clinics and organizations for welfare and relief work.

A Staff

A Health Centre should have a staff suitable to the community it serves. If the community is large enough to employ a trained Public Health Nurse she is placed in charge and the Health Centre becomes the office and headquarters of the Public Health Nurse. Sometimes it is necessary to employ more than one nurse and sometimes a clerical staff is necessary. If the community cannot provide a qualified nurse for full-time duty, the centre is placed in charge of a voluntary worker or workers who take turns

at duty. In either case it is usual to obtain the services of a trained nurse and a doctor on all occasions when needed.

The supervising nurse of a Health Centre arranges for conferences, meetings, the holding of well-baby clinics, health talks to children and other matters connected with the health of the community. Clinics are in charge of local physicians.

Voluntary Auxiliary Helpers

The Health Centre should be under the supervision of the local or district Health Officer, and it can best link its work directly with the needs of the people through the aid of a voluntary society interested in the prevention of disease, the improvement of health and the problems pertaining thereto. The Canadian Red Cross Society is an organization qualified to act in that capacity. A local branch of the Red Cross can render great assistance to a Health Centre. Its function is to encourage and support the work of the Centre and to interest the public in favor of all good measures of health reform and Public Health Service.

Volunteer Assistants in Clinics

There is a great deal of actual work, such as making records, weighing babies, providing the attractive social atmosphere, that can be done by volunteers, leaving the nurses free for the more technical duties. The social atmosphere of a clinic is one of the essentials in the success of preventive work.

Relief Service

In many communities part of the work of a Health Centre is associated with the relief of cases of ill health due to the lack of necessities of life. In a large city, for instance, some of the relief work is generally carried on by voluntary organizations. The Public Health Nurses and such organizations usually work together, as their work is supplementary the one to the other. The nurses help in adjusting health conditions for the family and the voluntary organization directs its efforts along general social and relief lines. There is such an intimate relationship between health and general living conditions that the two kinds of organizations are thrown together constantly. It has been found that about fifty per cent of the cases dealt with by an organization doing relief work have been referred to it by the Public Health Nurses. In like manner the relief workers often find occasion to refer cases of illness to the Public Health Nurses. Consequently the Health Centre might advantageously be a meeting place for both.

What a Health Centre Does

The Health Centre is of service to the sick and it is also of service to the well, for by means of health education it may prevent disease. The Health Centre is designed to

aid the well and healthy in keeping themselves so. It can furnish information as to how the community may be protected against communicable diseases. To the individual it can give lessons or furnish information upon personal hygiene and about free clinics and hospitals where the needy sick may be treated.

For the young mothers the Health Centre is the centre of information upon all subjects pertaining to their babies. Through its aid a mother may obtain the best advice before her child is born. There also mothers may learn the best means of nourishing and rearing their children in order that they may be spared most, or all, of the illnesses supposed to be incidental to babyhood.

Pre-natal clinics are a feature of this work. They are in charge of local physicians and are intended to carry out the following purposes:

- (1) To emphasize to each mother the national importance of the child.
- (2) To provide for co-operation with the nurse for the betterment of the birth conditions of that child, by
 - (a) offering suggestions as to the means of improving home conditions;
 - (b) seeing that as far as possible there are cheerful surroundings and associations that are the right of every expectant mother;
 - and (c) providing patterns, advice and instruction in the preparation of the necessary supplies and clothes for the baby. In some cases these might be provided and sold to the mothers at a nominal cost.

Home Nursing

Classes in home nursing could be held at the Health Centre under the direction of Public Health authorities or some voluntary society. There might also be a registration and training of home-helpers. These are women who go into the home not to do nurse's work, but to perform the mother's household duties and work under the direction of the physician and Public Health Nurse until the mother is again able to take charge.

Development of the Health Centre Elsewhere

In the United States where Health Centres have been established in greater numbers than in Canada, they have been described as follows:

A HEALTH CENTRE IS:

The Headquarters for the public health work of a community.

The practical expression of the interest of the community in the health of its people.

A business-like way of associating health activities under one roof.

The latest step in the evolution of community health work.

The opportunity for co-ordinating efforts for the prevention of tuberculosis, mental, industrial and venereal diseases and the conservation of child life.

The opportunity of relating volunteer activities in matters of health to official health work of city, county, state and federal authorities.

Great results are achieved when many people, animated by a noble purpose, pull together for a great cause. Join the Red Cross and pull for a high standard of national health.

In a few countries and in many communities efficient Public Health Service has reduced the rate of infant mortality by from 30 to 50 per cent. in ten years.

Every child born in Canada should have an opportunity of starting life in sound physical health, of growing to maturity in and through the healthful exercise of its powers and then of continuing to live in good health under wholesome conditions until the full course of life is run. Towards that end the Red Cross calls upon all intelligent men and women to join the Crusade for Good Health and to join the Red Cross which can do more for the country in peace than it was able to accomplish in war.

Poverty, ill-health and even misery are frequently the result of disabilities, ailments or disease that might have been prevented by early intelligent action. The Red Cross aims at helping the people to adopt adequate measures of prevention and needs your help as a member.

It is hardly too much to say that in proportion as knowledge spreads in a population, disease and incapacity decline, and this becomes more evident as the gross forms of world-wide disease are overcome. As in the individual, so in the community, knowledge is the sheet anchor of preventive medicine—knowledge of the way of health, knowledge of the causes and channels of disease, knowledge of remedy.—Dr. George Newman,

If there are not already a Public Health Nurse and a Health Centre in your community, should you not be active in helping to have them provided? Join the Red Cross and thereby strengthen the hands of those who are seeking to improve the health of communities and of the Nation by the employment of Public Health Nurses and through the use of Health Centres.

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Care Before Birth



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EVERY mother desires to give her child the best possible start in life.

Although we are in the habit of reckoning life from the time of birth the babe when born is really some months old. This period before birth is really very important. The health of the mother during these months will, to a great extent, determine whether her child is to have a good start or begin life under the handicap of poor health. To be born healthy confers a wonderful heritage and such a splendid endowment can to a considerable degree be assured by the care of the mother before the birth of her child.

THE EXPECTANT MOTHER

What should an expectant mother do to ensure a healthy babe?

As soon as she is aware of her condition she should, if at all possible, place herself under the care of a good physician or maternity clinic. If there is a public health nurse in the district, she will be able to supply very valuable advice. Proper medical care will increase her comfort, enable her to avoid many trifling ills and worries and, best of all, will greatly reduce the possibilities of danger to herself and her child. She should act upon the doctor's orders and not follow the advice of well-meaning friends or neighbours.

The mother's teeth often decay during pregnancy and need special care to keep them clean. The expectant mother should have the dentist put her teeth in good condition.

Unusual symptoms which frequently indicate the necessity of careful attention during pregnancy have great significance to the practised physician. The treatment of abnormal conditions shown by such symptoms must begin early. Delay may be dangerous to both mother and child.

WHOLESOME FOOD

The first, best and only way for a mother to take care of her unborn babe is to take care of herself. To be well during pregnancy, and to remain well the mother should be cheerful and:—

Eat three meals of plain, simple, nourishing food. Use plenty of milk, eggs, well cooked fruits and green vegetables. Brown bread is better than white. She should not take meat or fish more than once a day nor eat anything which does not agree with her. If this diet does not prevent constipation the doctor may order some simple laxative.

The following matters should be also attended to:—

Keep fit by walking daily in the fresh air and working or taking other exercise in moderation.

Dress comfortably and sensibly. Avoid tight clothing and tight garters.

Keep the outside of the body clean by a bath; keep the inside clean by drinks of water between meals. Go to the toilet regularly at the same hour every day.

Sleep from 8 to 10 hours with the windows open and lie down for a short rest whenever very tired.

During the latter months of pregnancy the expectant mother should send her physician every fortnight a specimen of urine for examination. The doctor should be told of persistent and sudden or severe headaches, swelling of the face or hands, and increased swelling of the ankles. The doctor should be called at once if any discharge coloured by blood appears.

Patent medicines are often advertised to make child-birth safe and painless. They are frauds. Instead of wasting money on them expectant mothers should seek a doctor's advice.

AFTER BABY COMES

After the baby is born the mother should:—

Stay in bed at least ten days.

Do little or no work until the baby is about six weeks old and her strength has returned.

Eat the same good food as previously listed and take more milk and other fluids.

The doctor should see the mother when the baby is about six weeks old to make sure that the mother has quite recovered and that the baby is in good condition. Finally, the parents should make sure the baby's birth is registered. This should be done without fail, for, on some future occasion, an important decision upon such questions as the legality of the birth, the age, or the right to a legacy, may depend upon the registration as required by law.

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